

**GLENDAL CENTER
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Draft Testimony for February 27, 2015 by Giovanna Griffin

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and to the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Giovanna Griffin and I am the Senior Administrator at Glendale Center in Naugatuck, Connecticut. Glendale Center is a 120-bed skilled nursing center providing both long and short stay care in New Haven County. We are operated by Genesis Health Care. We are Joint Commissioned accredited and a Silver Quality Award recipient with the American Health Care Association. We serve those requiring skilled clinical needs from acute care settings with a wide range of medical needs including but not limited to recovery from sub-acute conditions, cardiac management, and orthopedic surgeries. On our short stay unit, we serve approximately 720 patients a year with a stay of approximately 16 days. Along with being a licensed Nursing Home Administrator for 25 years, my 16 years of service to Glendale, seasoned Department Managers and 150 staff with an average of over 5 years of longevity, we have historically been a longstanding, competent provider of nursing care.

I am honored to be here tonight with some of the key people from Genesis Healthcare and our industry to speak about the Governor's recommendations for this fiscal year. As the Senior Administrator in Connecticut, my responsibility goes beyond Glendale as I am asked to help at our sister homes to ensure quality improvement programs are in place to ensure customer satisfaction, clinical excellence, and good business practices and staff satisfaction. The caregivers I encounter want to deliver the highest quality care experience in a regulatory fashion. We do an amazing job with limited resources, high regulations and increasing desire to improve customer satisfaction with staff retention.

Being able to produce a compliant operation with necessary regulations, staff retention and good business outcomes is becoming increasingly volatile. Making the care what everyone wants for their loved ones is getting harder and harder. And the reason it's getting so hard isn't really difficult to understand---there has been almost no help in the budget for now going on 8 years. Flat while almost all of our costs are going up. Costs like raw food, medical supplies, increasing medical needs of our patients, taxes, health insurance. If the budget passes as is, it will be a decade of nearly flat funding for Connecticut skilled nursing centers. The idea that our nursing facility could be cut this session because of our state's ongoing financial troubles is so devastating---even beyond my ability to understand how we could deliver the care we want to deliver. I am not sure how I could implement any further cuts as the administrator or how I would tell my employees or

customers that we need to cut even more than our flat funding has required over the years. We have made significant staff reductions and supply budget reductions to stay running.

Here are some examples of what we've been up against while the rates have been stagnant:

- Here at Glendale Center the acuity of our residents is so much more complex as our population ages. And that there are few functioning options for those with high care needs to be home. The people we care for at Glendale need to be with us clinically. Their needs are too complex for care at home. They need us to provide sophisticated medical services and monitor their wound vacs, TPN feedings, IV Therapy, behaviors related to aging, assistance with feeding and staying clean, g tubes, foley bags, special beds and other expensive medical supplies to name a few.
- The time necessary to ensure that the care provided is not just clinical but also addresses psycho social needs in a personal way, individual, specific and constantly updating in a highly regulatory environment.
- The need to retain staff by keeping them current with education and quality improvement certificates and programs. This also includes honest feedback for reviews to grow staff and their commitment to this population. This hardworking staff like nursing assistants, dietary aides, cooks, nurses, physicians assistants, nurse practitioners, rehab therapy staff, recreation therapy staff, housekeepers, laundry workers, office staff also require health insurance, competitive wages and benefits like sick and vacation time to be retained.

In closing, I want to thank you for your kind consideration in remembering the nursing homes in Connecticut as you vote for budget reform and invite you all to visit us at Glendale or any Genesis HealthCare Center to talk with us, our customers and their families and observe our practices. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.